

Revised  
POSITION PAPER  
Eighth Regular Session  
of the General Assembly

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~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~  
SD/A/C.1/  
August 29, 1953

REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

THE PROBLEM

The Disarmament Commission's report will be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 704(VII) of April 3, 1953. The Commission only met once since that date, to approve its report of August 20 which expressed the hope that recent international events would create a more propitious atmosphere for consideration of the disarmament question, stated that the Commission expected to continue its work, and suggested that it should present a report to the Ninth General Assembly and the Security Council. The announcement that the Soviets had exploded a hydrogen bomb or device on August 12, 1953 has increased world interest in efforts to secure agreement on a comprehensive disarmament plan. It is anticipated that the USSR as a minimum may seek General Assembly support for a proposal to have a Great Power conference with disarmament as one of the principal items, and perhaps will make specific proposals to the Assembly for armaments limitation and outlawing of atomic and other mass-destruction weapons. The problem is what position should be taken by the United States concerning the report of the Disarmament Commission, or to meet Soviet gambits of the nature described.

UNITED STATES POSITION:

1. The United States should not introduce new substantive proposals, nor elaborate the existing substantive proposals already introduced in the United Nations by the United States, individually or joined by the United Kingdom and France.

2. The United States should:

(a) Point out that the United States and its principal allies had unilaterally disarmed after World War II, and that the free-world's rearmament program

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program had been forced upon it by aggressive Soviet efforts seeking world-domination;

(b) Review the record of its efforts in the United Nations to achieve agreement on disarmament, and forcefully emphasize that the proposals which the United States has already submitted in the Disarmament Commission, either unilaterally or in conjunction with the United Kingdom and France, provide a comprehensive approach to genuine disarmament negotiations which treats all elements of the problem.

(c) Emphasize the deep and abiding interest of the United States Government and the American people in achieving comprehensive, balanced, and safe-guarded disarmament, as evidenced by the President's speech of April 16, 1953, and various expressions of the will of the United States Congress; and point out that responsibility for lack of progress to date rests largely with the Soviet Union;

(d) Co-sponsor a resolution which: (1) approves the Disarmament Commission Report of August 20 and reaffirms the Commission's terms of reference, calling on the Commission to continue its efforts and report back to the General Assembly and the Security Council by September 1, 1954; (2) declares the view of the General Assembly that all States, particularly the Great Powers, should seek by peaceful means to achieve just political settlements and, concurrently with progress in this respect and the strengthening of world trust, should intensify their efforts to agree on a comprehensive and safe-guarded disarmament program; (3) supports the suggestion<sup>in</sup> the President's April 16, 1953 address, that agreement on and implementation of such disarmament program should enable all nations to devote a substantial percentage of the savings achieved by disarmament to world aid and reconstruction. (A tentative draft resolution illustrative of the type it may be necessary to initiate or co-sponsor is attached as Annex A.)

(e) Propose that any specific disarmament proposals be referred to the Disarmament Commission.

3. If the Soviet bloc introduces a resolution calling upon the Great Powers to confer and agree upon a disarmament program, the United States should, in addition to the course of action outlined above under paragraph 2:

(a) Point out that although the Foreign Ministers of the Four Powers might achieve agreement on broad avenues of approach, the complexities of the disarmament problem are such that the development of a comprehensive program must be delegated to experts, either in the Disarmament

Commission

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Commission or in Four Power conference.

(b) Indicate that while the United States is ready at the appropriate time to proceed with substantive disarmament discussions in Four Power Talks, the work of Four Power representatives convened to deal with this problem can be expected to be more fruitful should progress be made toward a solution of the outstanding political problems facing the world.

(c) Point out that, meanwhile, the Disarmament Commission should continue to deal with the problem. The Four Powers are represented on the Commission and it is always possible, within the Commission's framework, to arrange for specific Four Power discussions of the subject.

COMMENT

1. While the Soviet record during the 1952 meetings of the Disarmament Commission was one of intransigent refusal to discuss any of the extensive proposals put forward by the Western Powers, at the Seventh General Assembly session the Soviets indicated a much more flexible attitude toward the whole disarmament problem. Specifically, the Soviets dropped their past insistence that the five Great Powers should reduce armed forces and non-atomic armaments by one-third; that the General Assembly should by mere decision declare the unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons, suggesting this should be decided by the Disarmament Commission; and voted for most parts of the Disarmament resolution approved by the Seventh General Assembly, including language defining the Commission's tasks in terms previously unacceptable to the USSR. At the August 20, 1953 meeting of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Vyshinsky moved for approval of the Commission's report, which emphasized the hope that recent international events would create a more propitious atmosphere for reconsideration of the disarmament question.

2. The Stockholm meeting of the Bureau of World Peace Council on May 5, 1953 and the World Peace Council Session in Budapest on June 20 both adopted resolutions calling for reducing international tensions through negotiations by the Great Powers and, specifically, for Great Power

negotiation

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negotiation on reduction of armaments. The Soviet note of August 4, 1953 replying to our proposal of July 15 concerning a Four-Power meeting on the German question, called for a foreign ministers meeting on reduction of tension in international relations, particularly armaments reduction, as well as the German question.

3. From the above, we can anticipate a Soviet attempt to obtain General Assembly approval of private Great Power meetings to consider disarmament, and possibly to present specific proposals for armaments limitation and the prohibiting of atomic-hydrogen type weapons. The present United States policy, particularly as expressed in the President's address of April 16, 1953, is that progress on settling political issues between the Soviets and the Free World will aid us to proceed concurrently with disarmament. A Soviet effort to obtain General Assembly approval for private Great Power meetings on disarmament, even though there has been no material progress in settling such political issues as Austria and Germany, will have great attraction for most General Assembly Members, particularly since the announcement that the Soviets had set off a hydrogen bomb or device on August 12.

4. The underlying reasons for our wishing to defer Great Power discussions of disarmament are, first, because of the complexity and nature of the problem, disarmament is peculiarly ill-suited to bring out a real test of Soviet sincerity. It is relatively easy for the USSR to prolong negotiations by equivocal statements or involvement in details and by making illusory "concessions" which could confuse public opinion and create an unwarranted climate of hopefulness with serious consequent damage. Second, in the present state of tensions and in the absence of settlement of or progress on other political issues, disarmament is an exceedingly difficult field for the Soviets to make real concessions acceptable to the West. The core of the problem, a workable system of safeguards, necessarily strikes deeply at the isolation and secrecy of the USSR, which is not accidental external manifestation but a central sustaining pillar in the Soviet system.

5. The

maintaining the present United States initiative in the disarmament field and consequently enhancing the United States international political position, would be to (a) remind the Assembly that the free-world rearmament program had been forced upon it by Soviet threats; (b) reaffirm our continuing interest in attaining comprehensive and safe-guarded disarmament; (c) secure General Assembly approval of a resolution outlining the necessary relationship between progress in connection with the solution of other political issues and concurrent progress toward disarmament, in accordance with the general standards set forth in the President's speech of April 16, 1953; (d) indicate United States support of Great Power discussions of disarmament at an appropriate time and in relation to progress toward solving other US-USSR political issues, while pointing out that the Disarmament Commission has been set up for the specific purpose of dealing with the disarmament problem and that Great Power consultations can take place within the framework of the Commission.

6. If the Soviets do not try the Great-Powers-discussion gambit, but seek Assembly approval of specific proposals on disarmament somewhat similar to their past efforts, there should be little difficulty in following the line of action outlined under paragraph 2 of the United States position.

7. An exception to the line of action suggested above would occur if the National Security Council should decide that the United States should make new proposals in the Commission, after considering a paper which is in the process of being presented to the Council in accordance with a Council decision of February 18, 1953. However, this paper takes a generally negative line toward any new substantive proposals in the 8th General Assembly and proposes essentially following the course of action recommended here.

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DRAFT RESOLUTION ON DISARMAMENT

The General Assembly

Believing that, as all humanity shares a common hunger for peace, for fellowship and for justice, no people can be held, as a people, to be an enemy,

Affirming that the security and progress of each state ultimately lies not in isolation but in effective international cooperation, and that no state has a right to dictate to other states their form of government,

Mindful of the international tensions which grip the world, of which the burden of armaments is evidence, and believing that lasting peace cannot be firmly based upon an armaments race but rather upon just relations and honest understanding ~~XXXXX~~ between all nations,

Reaffirming its responsibility for considering the principles governing disarmament,

Believing that progress toward agreement on the principal issues which heighten international tension would facilitate achieving concurrent progress on an agreed disarmament program,

Mindful that the aim of a system of world wide disarmament is to prevent war and to release the world's human and economic resources for the purposes of peace,

1. Takes note of the Third Report of the Disarmament Commission of August 20, 1953 and, particularly the Commission's hope that recent international events will create a more propitious atmosphere for the reconsideration of the disarmament question, whose capital importance in conjunction with other questions affecting the maintenance of peace is recognized by all.

2. Declares its belief that

a) The rebirth of trust among nations is vital to the attainment of a peace which is neither partial nor punitive;

b) All States should seek by peaceful means to achieve just settlements of their international disputes in accordance with the obligations set forth in the Charter of the United Nations;

c) Concurrently with these attempts to settle existing international disputes, progress on which would materially strengthen that world trust essential to disarmament, all States and in particular the major Powers should intensify their efforts to agree on a comprehensive and coordinated program of disarmament;

d) Agreement on and implementation of a disarmament program should enable all nations to devote a substantial percentage of the savings achieved through disarmament to efforts to aid the underdeveloped areas of the world, stimulate mutually beneficial world trade, and help build a world in which all peoples can be productive and prosperous.

3. Reaffirms General Assembly Resolution 704 (VII) of 8 April 1953, and requests the Disarmament Commission to continue its efforts to develop agreement on proposals for a comprehensive and coordinated system of disarmament, as defined in that resolution.

4. Requests the Commission to report to the General Assembly and to the Security Council not later than September 1, 1954.

5. Calls on all States to cooperate in aiding the Disarmament Commission to reach agreement on the problems with which it is concerned.

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